

Appin No. 09/575,129
Amdt. Dated September 24, 2004
Response to Office action of August 4, 2004

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action has been carefully considered. The issues raised are traversed and addressed below with reference to the relevant headings and paragraph numbers appearing under the Detailed Action of the Office Action.

Claim Objections

In view of the objections raised in paragraph 1 the dependencies of claims 25, 101, 106, 164, 165, 167 and 169 have been revised. In addition to this, claims 168 and 173 to 176 have now been cancelled from the application. We believe that this overcomes the objections raised in the paragraph.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

In view of the Examiner's objections raised in paragraphs 3 onwards, claims 1, 4, 82 and 86 have now been revised to further clarify the invention. In particular, the claims have been revised clarify that the interface surface has disposed therein or thereon visible information relating to the computer software as well as the coded data indicative of an identity of the interface surface and plurality of reference points.

In addition to this, the claim has been revised to clarify that the sensing device senses at least some of the coded data and uses at least some of the sensed coded data to generate the indicating data.

As far as the objections are concerned, we do not believe that Bennett describes an interface surface that includes visible information relating to the computer software. In particular, Bennett does not describe the provision of any visible information which is in addition to the coded data indicative of the reference points. As also acknowledged by the Examiner, Bennett does not describe coded data indicative of the identity of the interface surface and consequently does not describe generating indicating data indicative of the identity of the interface surface. Thus, at best Bennett merely describes the provision of an interface surface having coded data indicative of a plurality of reference points.

The Examiner has gone on to highlight that Lesnick teaches an interface surface having coded data indicative of the identity of the interface surface and information relating to computer software and that consequently, the skilled person would combine the teaching of these two documents to arrive at the teaching of the claim. We respectfully submit that this is not the case.

In particular, the tablet used in Bennett is only used for the purpose of determining X-Y positional information. This is used by a computer system to control the position of a cursor, or, for example, to allow handwriting input. However, the tablet is not adapted to be used with additional visible information provided on its surface and accordingly, there is no urge for a person skilled in the art to require an identity to be associated with a tablet. In this regard, as the tablet is used as an input device for a computer system, if the system of Bennett is used to provide input for specific situations, this would be achieved by providing appropriate information on the display 4. Providing visual information on the tablet means that a respective tablet would be required for each desired use, which would defeat the intended purpose of Bennett, namely to provide a generic input device using a passive tablet.

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Similarly, when considering the teaching of Lesnick, we do not believe that it would be obvious to utilise the positional X-Y data input system of Bennett in the teaching of Lesnick as Lesnick already provides a mechanism which allows input by the user. In particular, this involves having the user mark the document and then scan the document using a suitable scanning device. The document scanner detects the presence of the user input marks to allow a user input to be detected. In this regard, there is nothing to suggest that any other form of X-Y positional input determination would be useable in this situation.

We would also highlight that claim 1 requires that the sensing device senses coded data and generates indicating data when the sensing device is placed in an operative position relative to the interface surface. That is, when the sensing device is positioned at a particular location on the interface surface. This feature is not taught or suggested by Lesnick.

In any event, even if it were obvious to combine the teachings of these documents, we respectfully submit that this still does not teach each and every feature of the claims. In particular, the obvious combination of these documents is to utilise coded data similar to the coded data provided on the tablet of Bennett to provide X-Y positional coordinate information. In addition to this, the page would also be printed with visible information similar to that shown in Lesnick including the coded data barcode.

Thus, this would teach a system which utilises a visible barcode in order to determine the identity of the document and similarly, uses the X-Y position coordinate information of Bennett in order to determine a position of a sensing device.

For such a system to operate, it would therefore be necessary for the user to scan the barcode utilising a barcode scanner such as the camera 110 of Lesnick to allow the identity of the document to be determined. The user would then need to position an optical stylus, similar to that shown in Bennett, at a location on the page to allow the relevant X-Y positional coded data to be determined.

Thus, the combined teaching of Bennett and Lesnick requires a two step process of both scanning the barcode and subsequently positioning the sensing device in an operative position to allow its position to be determined.

In contrast to this, claim 1 requires that when a sensing device is placed in an operative position relative to the interface surface, it senses some of the coded data and generate indicating indicative of both the identity of the interface surface, and a position of a sensing device relative to the interface surface.

This arrangement is particularly advantageous as it allows the computer system to determine from the sensing device both the identity of the interface surface, and the position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface, when the sensing device is placed in an operative position. This is a single step process which occurs because the identity of the interface surface is encoded by the coded data, for example at each of the plurality of reference points, and not just by a separate barcode.

In particular, for example if the user is to designate one of the interactive elements such as the interactive elements 652 shown in Figure 6 of Lesnick. The user must first scan the barcode 602 and then position the sensing device in an operative position within the user

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interactive element 652. Positional coded data according to Bennett, which is provided at this location could then be detected.

When the user wishes to indicate an alternative interactive element a similar process must then be performed. In this instance, whilst the user could scan the barcode only a single time, this would mean that when the user is to indicate the presence of an interactive element on an alternative document, it will be necessary to further rescan the barcode thereby increasing the number of steps performed by the user.

In contrast, the teaching of the present invention will simply allow the user to place the sensing device directly within the interactive element 652 and from this the computer system will determine both the identity of the document and the identity of the user interactive element 652.

In view of this, we respectfully submit that the combination of the prior art does not teach a method in which a sensing device can be placed in an operative position to thereby cause generation of indicating data indicative of both the identity and the position. Hence we believe claim 1 is both novel and inventive over the cited prior art.

As similar amendments have been made to the other independent claims we believe that similar arguments apply.

As far as the remaining dependent claims are concerned, we reserve the right to comment on these in due course. In particular, we recognise that there is a significant amount of subject matter within these claims and would prefer the Examiner to focus on the arguments provided above with respect to claim 1. If the Examiner maintains the objections to claim 1 and the remaining independent claims, we will comment further on the scope of the dependent claims in due course. In view of this, this response does not represent an admission of any of the Examiner's comments made in the first Office Action with respect to the dependent claims.

Despite this however, the Applicant has added new dependent claims 177 to 180. We respectfully submit that in the event that the Examiner believes that claims 1, 4, 82 and 86 lack novelty and inventive step over the cited prior art, these claims define further distinctions which are not shown by the prior art documents.

In particular, claim 177 highlights that at least some of the visible information represents the interactive element and that this is associated with a region of the interface surface. A basis for this can be found on page 12, lines 3 to 13, which shows the visible representation of the interactive elements and on page 16, lines 13 onwards, which highlights the use of regions.

Furthermore, claim 177 sets out that when the sensing device is placed in an operative position the sensing device senses coded data provided within the region and generates indicating data using the coded data within the region which allows the computer system to identify the region and hence the interactive element.

Thus, this claim further defines that if the sensing device is simply placed in an operative position with respect to the visible interactive element, this allows both the indicating data to be generated (ie both the identity and position of the sensing device to be determined) and hence allows both the identity of the zone and hence the interactive element to be determined.

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Neither Bennett nor Lesnick describe visible information representing an interactive element, the element also being associated with a region of the interface surface.

For reasons set out above with respect to our arguments regarding claim 1, we believe this defines further distinctions over the cited prior art.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the objections and claim rejections have been successfully traversed and addressed. The amendments do not involve adding any information that was not already disclosed in the specification, and therefore no new matter is added. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the claims 1 to 180, and the application as a whole with these claims, are allowable, and a favourable reconsideration is therefore earnestly solicited.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's objections have been successfully traversed. Accordingly, it is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are courteously solicited.

Very respectfully,

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